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NON-TRADITIONAL OCCUPATIONS

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1. Human Potential

Women have always worked and according to Elizabeth Baker (1964), never worked harder than they did in their own homes under the domestic system of production prevalent during colonial times and during the early days of the nation.

The very inventions which resulted in the factory system of production, however, were responsible for the early employment of women outside the home.

By 1900, 18 out of every 100 Canadian wage earners were women. The largest group representing 40% of all employed women was in the service areas, including domestic service. The second largest group consisting of 25% of the working women, was employed in manufacturing industries, in some kind of manual operation. The third largest group, comprising 18% of employed women, worked on farms.

By 1963, women made up 29% of the total Canadian labour force; by 1973 this figure had jumped to 35% and in 1976 to 37.4% with a participation rate of 45.0%. In 1978, Ontario, which commands approximately 40.3% of Canada's entire labour force, the participation rate of women is now close to 50%.

With the exception of those times of crises when women either worked side by side with men or replaced men for combat duties as in war years, women have been clustered in the clerical and service areas....low paying, low status, often dead end jobs that involve a degree of subservience to men. In addition to working in what have been called job ghettos, women have been financially disadvantaged, earning one half the salary and if they have responsibility for children, working twice as hard. Job segregation based on sex has actually increased over the years.

In his book, "Male Chauvinism", Michael Korda relates how women have traditionally been channelled into certain areas and "protected" from the stressful and dirty positions. But, "this chivalry" has mitigated more against them than for them. Not only do these "unfeminine" jobs often pay well, they also offer more upward mobility. Unless a woman has worked in the "dirty" areas of a plant, for instance, she can never be a plant manager.

Today, women are just beginning to examine their career objectives and to realize that their average life work expectancy is 33 years (compared to 37 for men); young women are just beginning to give more thought to choosing their educational options.

Most women work for the same reasons that men do, i.e. to earn money to support themselves and their families. Although the non-traditional occupations do offer greater financial remuneration, this is not the only consideration. The Committee on Getting and Holding Manpower in Northwestern Ontario reports that "despite high unemployment, currently there is a severe shortage of skilled tradesmen in the province. A recent Federal government survey indicated that 85% of the skilled tradesmen in Ontario manufacturing are over 45 years old; less than 3% are under 30; and 75% of the skilled tradesmen are foreign trained. The problem has reached critical proportions." A recent paper Employer Centered Training has clearly pointed out "the major problems facing Ontario are unemployment, inflation, and the need to achieve much higher levels of productivity gains than in the past."

Women make up one half of the precious human resources in Ontario; the time is now for women to prepare themselves for the trades, and for everyone to discard outdated blind prejudices towards women in non-traditional jobs. Lowered immigration and almost zero population will eventually force employers to look to women to fill job vacancies.

2. The Role of Employers

Traditionally, women have responded to the needs of society; during war years they were found in all areas except

combat duty. We know and they know that women can do it!

However, we also know that except in times of crises, employers have been reluctant to give women the same opportunities as men despite the evidence that when women have had the chance, they have proven more than satisfactory in job performance. All sorts of reasons have been conjured up to keep women "in their place" which has not been in non-traditional jobs - "the work is too heavy", "too dirty", "unfeminine", "the men wouldn't want them", "the wives would complain", "the work is too dangerous" and so on, ad nauseum.

For women who have chosen to work in non-traditional jobs, there is an 8 weeks program sponsored by Canada Employment and Immigration through community colleges, called INTO (Introduction to Non-Traditional Occupations). A tremendous amount of care has to be taken in the recruitment, selection and training of the students, coinciding with individual work with the employers, in order that the experience will be a positive one for all. Graduates are encouraged to support each other within a new organization which began in Manitoba, called Women in the Trades. Moreover, in the beginning, it will be essential that "some" women rather than "one" woman be placed in what might be a difficult area, e.g. harassment by male co-workers.

Therefore, it is of grave concern to myself as an educator and an administrator in a community college, to learn from the report on a conference sponsored by the Committee on Getting and Holding Manpower in North-western Ontario, held at Quetico Centre, March 6-7, 1978, called Workplace Education in Ontario. The two key result areas were:

- . Training will be done on site
- . We will develop our own instructors

Past history has shown us that if left to employers and unions, women will continue to be non-existent in apprenticeship programs, and to achieve representation only on traditionally female training programs - hairdressing and secretarial.

This will be a disaster not only for women, but for our overall work force which is already desperate for skilled people in the trades.

3. The Role of Government

Training by Canada Employment and Immigration Commission only for "jobs they can identify" will, of course, seriously limit training opportunities for women unless they enter the trades where there are job vacancies.

Already, there has been a reduction of 25% in commercial training and 35% in upgrading areas where women occupy many of the seats.

Canada Manpower and Immigration have initiated and sponsored, in co-operation with community colleges, the Introduction to Non-Traditional Occupations program for women, thereby providing incentive and opportunity for women to get into the trades. This is a good, practical "how to" experience which should be promoted by community colleges and grasped by women who will wish to choose a non-traditional occupation.

During 1977-78 Canada Employment and Immigration Commission has established targets for female participation in the training programs. These programs include the Canada Manpower Training Program (institutional program), the Canada Manpower Industrial Training Program (training in industry) and Youth Apprenticeship Training (apprenticeship training for youth between the ages of 17 to 25 in six demand occupations). All Canada Manpower/Canada Employment Centres were requested to satisfy an overall target of 15% in terms of female referrals to courses identified as non-traditional. In addition, an overall target of 7½% was established for female participation in the Youth Apprenticeship Training program. The six demand occupations included under this program are as follows:

- . Machinist
- . Auto Body Repair
- . Tool and Dye Maker
- . Farm Equipment Mechanic
- . Motor Vehicle Mechanic
- . Heavy Duty Equipment Mechanic

Women must seek out and utilize training programs which are now available to them.

I move that the Joint Councils on the Status of Women adopt the resolutions concerning Equal Opportunities for women in Non-Traditional Jobs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- . Whereas women are under represented in the non-traditional jobs especially the skilled apprenticeable trades in proportion to their participation rate in the labour market;
- . Whereas women have been discouraged from attempting to enter apprenticeship and other non-traditional women's job areas;
- . Whereas women often lack the positive self image, information and sometimes qualifications to confidently apply for jobs in the non-traditional areas, and are therefore easily discouraged;
 - . That to facilitate entry of women into the apprenticeship training programs, mandatory awareness-training be provided for training staff which interfaces directly with the public.
 - . That creation of a special desk or channel in all locations for female applicants for apprenticeship, staffed by a person committed to the inclusion of women in these non-traditional jobs; in the majority of cases this person would most appropriately be a woman.

- . That grievance process be set up whereby women "turned off", "put down" or rejected by the counselling or entry process into apprenticeship could be heard.

- . That a training program be set up with specific emphasis on recruiting women to prepare them for entry into the non-traditional trade areas.

This program would be aimed specifically at dealing with such elements as assertiveness and the female socialization process.

- . That governments work with employers and unions to set targets for the entry of women into apprenticeship schemes.

- . That governments execute a personalized campaign to improve and publicize the image of females in non-traditional jobs. (Campaign where women in non-traditional jobs would tour schools, women's clubs, etc., throughout the provinces to discuss the issues around working in these jobs.

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